AU-gust Writing Challenge 2021

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AU-gust Writing Challenge 2021

by slashyrogue

Summary

A collection of daily AU Hannigram prompts

Day 1 : Ancient Gods

When the God of Death moves in next door a few things happen:

All of the trees and plants in the neighborhood start to die.

His dogs start being scared to go outside.

And Will starts to have erotic dreams about him.

Will's only seen the man once when he moved in, and the look they shared really didn't scream erotic. It was more "if you bother me I'll kill you" so he hasn't.

But the dreams start becoming more frequent as the weeks go by and neighbor after neighbor moves out because "they're not gonna live like this."

How Wolf Trap got assigned the God of Death of all the ancients they could've been given seems more like a punishment than a gift.

The ancients, all twelve of them, have only announced themselves a few months ago and everytime one settles the people cheer.

It's a gift.

Who wouldn't want to be that close to greatness?

Will only hopes his new neighbor can't see his dreams. He really doesn't want to be smited for thinking he'd even been anywhere near worthy of a God.

It's months later and five neighbors gone when Will realizes just why he's having the dreams. A crash wakes him out of one of them, and the dogs start barking like crazy as he curses realizing he left his rifle by the back door.

He gets up slow and shushes the dogs as he walks toward the noise only to find someone rummaging through his kitchen drawers.

Will steps forward and the floor creaks making the assailant turn. "Hey, hey—"

The man is wearing a mask as he rushes up to Will brandishing a knife with the obvious intent to stab him. But something, or rather, *someone* stops him. Will stares with wide eyes as The God of Death in all his perfect suited glory, burns someone to death in his kitchen.

He can't look away as the man screams and dissolves into nothing before being transported to what Will assumes is Hell.

Will is frozen as his new neighbor turns.

"Are you alright?"

"I…"

"I apologize for the intrusion. I've been waiting for this night, you see. It's been…difficult to wait so I may have sent some residual thoughts your way."

Will blinks.

"The dreams were yours?"

“I apologize.”

“You didn’t even ask my name!”

He frowns. “Because I already knew it.”

“You…you killed every plant in the neighborhood and my dogs…”

“I’m afraid that was built up frustration. I’m normally quite good at keeping my powers in check.”

Will shakes his head. “Just…just go.”

“But…”

“And please stop sending me sex dreams.”

“I…I was hoping to introduce myself.”

“God of Death,” Will mumbles. “I know.”

“That is not my given name.”

“I don’t—”

“Hannibal.”

Will’s whole body feels the name and he stumbles back shaking his head. “No.”

“What?”

“No, I’m not doing this.”

“Will…”

“I don’t know why you’ve decided to fixate on me Mister, but I’m saying no right now. I’m not interested.”

The God of Death, AKA Hannibal, reaches out and touches Will’s arm. “I’m afraid I won’t be deterred. You see the reason I came here is you. You’re my soulmate. I was not allowed to interact until our colliding moment and now that I’ve been allowed, I won’t take no for an answer.”

Will hisses, wrenching his arm away, and pushes him back hard. “No means no, jackass. I’m sorry that you came all this way but I’m NEVER going to be your ANYTHING.”

Hannibal frowns and steps away, his eyes glowing red.

“I will leave you for now, Will. But I’ve only just begun.”

He pops out of the kitchen just as fast as he popped in and Will nearly collapses when he’s gone.

“What the fuck?”

The God of Death just said they were soulmates, like something out of a goddamn fairytale.

Will covers his face and starts to groan.

It's just his luck that he learns some ancient secret about the ancients and it's the very worst thing that could've ever happened to him.

What was he gonna do?

Day 2: Exotic Vacation

Will doesn't know why he's in Hawaii.

All it's doing is making him remember the reason he's there alone.

The decorations in the Honeymoon suite alone made him drink almost the entire bottle of champagne, and sitting alone at the hotel restaurant he's surrounded by couples in love.

He shouldn't have listened to Bev.

She told him he should still go, despite Molly calling off the wedding, and he'd wanted to get away from all the "I'm so sorry" visits to his house every other day but now he almost wishes he'd just stayed home with the dogs.

At least they wouldn't be looking at him with such pity.

It's only been one day of his seven day Honeymoon vacation and he's seriously considering turning in his return ticket to go home tonight.

Then someone sends a drink to his table.

"Um….I didn't order this."

The waitress, whose nametag reads Sally, smiles. "You have an admirer," she says, turning her gaze across the room.

There's a man in a tan suit with a matching hat who tips his head to Will with a smile. He's got to be super hot in that suit, but Will can see why he's wearing it when he looks that good.

He blushes. "Um...what is it?"

"A Sex on the Beach," Sally says, grinning, "Enjoy."

Will takes a sip and the sweet flavor makes him smile.

His dinner comes not long after, tilapia with mashed potatoes, and with it another drink.

"I didn't…I'm not even finished with the first one."

Sally laughs. "Your admirer does not care. He...says your smile is worth the price, even if you don't partake."

Will pushes his glasses up on his nose. "Um...can you send him a drink back for me?"

She smiles. "Yes, of course. Anything in particular?"

"I...I'm not sure. What would you send?"

"Are you thinking of engaging with this man?"

Will looks across the room and his admirer takes off his hat. His hair is perfectly coiffed, and he's even better looking than Will thought he was.

"I...I think so."

“I’d suggest...if I’m not being too...much...a Climax? It’s very complimentary to the Sex on the Beach he’s been sending you just a little...more.”

Will blushes beat red. “Yeah, that’s...yeah.”

Sally smiles. “One Climax.”

He’s nervous as he eats his fish, and doesn’t look up to see the man’s reaction. Will expects the man to come over but he doesn’t, and he’s disappointed when he flags down the waitress.

“I think I want my check.”

She smiles. “It’s been paid already, sir. Along with a very generous tip by Mister Hannibal Lecter.”

Will’s heart beats faster. “Really?”

“Oh yes,” she says, “Would you...like to give him a message before you go?”

Will looks over and sees Hannibal watching him. He lets out a deep breath, his cheeks burning, and takes a chance.

“Tell him I’m in the Honeymoon Suite, and...I’d like to share a drink with him tonight if he’s up for it.”

Sally scribbles down a note. “You’re alone, sir?”

“Yes, very much alone.”

She smiles. “I don’t think you will be for long.”

Will smiles back, still nervous, and nods. “I...thank you.”

“Good luck.”

He heads back to his room, heart beating wildly in his chest, and wonders if he’ll be seeing Hannibal Lecter again.

Maybe, just maybe, this vacation wasn’t such a bad idea after all.

Day 3: Fantasy (Alternate)

Will was never meant to be a witch.

He'd spent most of his life living in the shadow of his mother, John Graham angry that she left them, and knew his father was happy when he did not show signs of magic during his teen years.

The very thought of magic left a bad taste on his tongue, and as the years passed he avoided it whenever possible.

He was not meant for magic, did not want it, and was happy for it.

Then, of course, he met Hannibal Lecter.

Who just happened to be a familiar.

Will had met his fair share of familiars: cats, dogs, toads, birds, and the like; and knew most of them were spoiled brats who took advantage of their hosts. Familiars had an allure to magic users that were unlike any other, and they knew that.

When Jack told him Hannibal was coming Will did not think twice.

He wasn't a witch.

But one touch of their fingertips and Will felt instantly he'd made a huge mistake.

Hannibal's eyes turned gold as he grabbed his hand.

"Mine," he growled, "You..."

His shift seemed to come all at once, and he gripped Will's tie roughly.

"Hannibal, you---" Jack started to say, but was cut off when something happened unexpectedly

Will blinked and they were suddenly at his own home, laying his bed as the dogs barked excitedly at his arrival. Hannibal licked Will's cheek, nuzzling at his neck, and purred.

"I don't...I'm not a witch."

"You are," Hannibal said, lifting his head, "And...you're mine."

Will shivered.

"I don't...I...."

Hannibal lifted Will's hand and pressed their palms together.

He could feel the current of magic flow between them and moaned at the sensation.

"You've held back for so long, Will," he purred, "So long....I can feel how much it's hurt you. I...I can feel how hungry your magic is for an outlet. Let me be that outlet."

Will shivered. "I don't know what I'm doing."

"I do."

He stared up into Hannibal's yellow eyes.

"Ok."

He smiled and gripped Will's hand tight.

"I knew I'd find you," he said, "I knew someday I'd find you."

Will's voice shook when he whispered.

"Mine."

Hannibal smiled.

"Yes, Will," he whispered, licking Will's hand, "I'm all yours."

Day 4: Dancing

Taking the course, “The Art of Seduction” was the worst mistake Will ever made.

He’d gone to one class and seen the smarmy instructor, one Frederick Chilton, who seemed eager to display his prowess with both men and women but in reality couldn’t get a single person to look his way on the outing he took them to that very class where not one, not two, but three different people threw drinks in his face.

Will went to the front desk of the community center for a refund but was told there were no refunds so here he was in class number three to a different type of bar.

They’d gone to a normal bar, a mildly pricey one, and now a high end place Will wouldn’t normally be caught dead in that even had a dance floor.

Chilton had successfully gotten one guy a date, a lonely man with a facial deformity who very quickly got hit on by someone who realized his dick was big and seemed more eager to fuck than talk. There were ten others, a few of them just getting together amongst themselves, though the one guy he’d come to like a lot was this younger kid named Adam who seemed a bit out of place.

“Now Adam,” Chilton said, ready to put his hand on Adam’s shoulder but Will got there first.

“He doesn’t like to be touched by strangers,” Will mumbled, “You okay, Adam?”

Adam smiled. “Yes, Will. I’m fine. Thank you.”

“Alright then,” Chilton said, glaring at Will, “Adam I think there’s lovely young woman there who…”

Adam frowned. “I liked the man at the second bar.”

“The biker who hit on you so blatantly outside? He was…”

“Nice,” Will said, “And you practically dragged Adam off before he could even get his number.”

“He was a delinquent!”

“And you know that, how?” Will asked, glaring back, “There are plenty of decent bikers who aren’t criminals.”

“And you’d know that, would you?”

Will stepped in close to him. “Yeah, I would. I’ve been around a lot of different people, unlike you, you pretentious asshole.”

Chilton scoffed. “I’m sure you have, Mister Graham. Tell me why are you even here if you’re so *socially sound?* You seem to know just what to do, yes? Would you like to demonstrate on how to get someone to dance with you in an establishment such as this?”

Will blushed. “I…”

Adam squeezed Will’s arm. “You can do it, Will,” he whispered, “You’re very nice, I know you can.”

He sighed. “Yeah, I will,” he said, hoping his voice didn’t shake as walked off.

The place was pretty packed but there were still plenty of people around on their own. He spotted a woman in a pink dress sitting by herself who took one look at his drabby suit and rolled her eyes walking away when he sat down.

Will sighed.

“Fuck.”

“Is this seat taken?”

He looked up and blinked.

The man in front of him had to be the most perfectly put together human being he’d ever seen. His hair was perfectly styled, clothes obviously high end, and his smile made Will’s stomach flip.

“Um, no.”

He sat down across from him and frowned. “You seem to be having a bit of trouble. I saw the altercation you had earlier.”

He blushed. “Oh.”

“Can I be of assistance?,” he asked, holding out his hand, “Dr. Hannibal Lecter.”

Will shivered as they touched hands and shook slowly. “Will Graham, “ he whispered, still blushing, “I...I’m in a community center class for people who...aren’t great at getting dates.”

“You seem to be doing just fine.”

He smiled. “Is this a date?”

“Would you like it to be?”

Will laughed. “Maybe?”

Hannibal put a hand over his on the table. “Well then, we’ll see how it goes. Though I would ask what the altercation had to do with class?”

“The instructor is an asshole and was picking on this poor guy so I sort of got myself into a mess.”

“How so?”

“He sort of dared I wouldn’t be able to get someone to dance with me here tonight.”

Hannibal stood up at once and held out his hand.

“Would now be sufficient?”

Will blinked. “You really want to dance with me? I’m not all that good.”

“I’ll lead then.”

He blushed and took Hannibal’s hand and let him lead them to the dance floor where a sudden slow song began. Hannibal pulled Will in close, their bodies touching, and smiled. “Ready?”

Will nodded.

They began the dance slowly, a whirlwind of turns and twirls that Will got lost in but picked up rather fast. He was hard as a rock by the time Hannibal dipped him, and when he sat up he knew his face had to be flushed.

“That was…”

Hannibal touched his cheek. “Just lovely.”

Someone cleared their throat and they both turned to see Chilton along with the rest of the class standing at the dance floor’s edge. Will let go of Hannibal and walked over to them smugly.

“Well, that wasn’t hard.”

“You got lucky, that doesn’t mean---”

Hannibal came up behind Will and put a hand around his waist, pulling him close. “Will, is this man bothering you?”

“No,” Will said, almost laughing as he turned to smile at him, “But...I was thinking we’d go to another bar we were at earlier. This really isn’t my kinda place.”

Hannibal smiled. “Wherever you want to go is fine with me.”

Will turned. “Adam, you wanna go find that guy?”

Adam’s eyes widened. “Yes! Very much!”

“Adam, you really shouldn’t…”

Will grabbed his hand and brought him up to Hannibal.

“Adam, this is Hannibal. Hannibal, this is Adam.”

Hannibal nodded. “Nice to meet you, Adam.”

Adam smiled. “Nice to meet you too,” he said before turning to Will, “Can we go? It’s been over an hour.”

“Lead the way.”

Will and Hannibal held hands as they walked behind Adam. “You really want to hang out with us somewhere else?”

“If it means I get to have one more dance with you, Will, I’d go just about anywhere.”

Will blushed and squeezed his hand. “They don’t have a dance floor at this place.”

Hannibal kissed his hand as they walked. “There are many different types of dancing,” he whispered, “And we don’t need music to dance. Do we?”

Will shook his head. “No, we really don’t.”

As they headed for the parking lot Adam stopped.

“We don’t have a car, Will. Remember? Chilton brought us all here in that van?”

Hannibal pressed a button and an alarm went off. “I have a vehicle, if you’re comfortable in a Bentley?”

Will smiled. “I think we’ll be just fine.”

As they headed into Hannibal’s car he couldn’t help but look over at him multiple times until Hannibal spoke.

“Like what you see?”

“Very much.”

“Is that why you’re smiling?”

“No,” Will said, grinning now, “I just...maybe taking that class wasn’t that bad an idea after all.”

Hannibal kissed Will’s hand again and smiled.

“I think it was the very best idea you ever had if it led to this.”

He blushed. “Me too.”

Day 5: Science Fiction

The first time Will sees another alien it's at the grocery store.

Hellman's Grocery is a mundane, boring place that he's gone to so much it's like muscle memory as he walks down each aisle filling his cart with the same things: lettuce, tomatoes, steak, milk, and the occasional dog toy.

He hardly ever pays much attention to the people around him, but when he sees a crowd of people standing around he can't help himself.

"Oh my gosh," some woman whispers, her eyes wide, "Is he…?"

Will steps to the side and catches a glimpse of green skin. He parts the crowd some more, hardly able to stop himself, and sees the alien fully.

He's wearing a nice shirt and khakis while standing rigid in front of the macaroni and cheese. Will can tell he's agitated and in a strange burst of confidence pushes through the crowd.

"Hey," he says, making the alien turn to him.

His eyes are red and he looks terrified. "I was just hungry."

He sticks several boxes of macaroni in the poor alien's cart and walks with him up to the counter. The alien tells him he's name is Adam, and he follows him out after buying his few things.

The alien stares at Will oddly. "How do you hide it?"

Will smiles. “No one pays much attention to me,” he laughs, “And it’s much easier to hide when you’re just background noise.”

Adam frowns. “No one talks to me either, but I just...I don’t like people being so…close.”

Will pats his shoulder. “I know, Adam. I know. If you ever need anything, honestly anything at all, call me.”

He leaves the store and lets the shield he places on himself most days fade.

Will has been on Earth for almost two decades, sixteen years before the Great Becoming, and he’s never felt the need to let himself be seen. His job might bring him in contact with many different humans that he teaches but he’s never really socialized with them.

Then, of course, he gets called in to consult on a murder case.

And meets Dr. Hannibal Lecter.

Hannibal wants to socialize with him, Will’s overwhelmed by how much he wants to be close, and his own feelings just being near him are more intense than anything he’s ever known. He can’t keep himself from searching Hannibal’s mind, and the darkness there is overwhelming.

He should tell someone who and what Hannibal is.

But he doesn’t want to.

Months after meeting him Will’s still seeing Adam. They meet mostly at coffee shops and Will’s own home, though he’s been to Adam’s as well. The young alien is still struggling to adjust, but he’s doing ok.

When he tells Adam about Hannibal the conversation they have changes everything.

“You’ve found your Heart.”

Will blinks, still feeling strange to be out of shield. “My Heart?”

Adam frowns. “Did you forget? That’s why we all come here. Our hearts.”

He looks at the dogs. “I thought...I thought they were…”

“There are things that make us feel good, but our Heart makes us feel whole. We’d do anything for our Heart.”

Will closes his eyes. “Fuck.”

“You’re unhappy with yours?”

He shakes his head and opens his eyes again to a red haze. “He’s...dark, and...not right. He...he’s hurt people.”

Adam nods. “Sometimes our hearts amplify the dark parts of ourselves or the light ones. But they’re ours. You can’t run from them.”

Will sighs, rubbing his eyes. “You haven’t met yours?”

“No, but...I think mine will be dark too. It doesn’t scare me though. Our Hearts might be dark, but...they’ll complete us.”

Will smiles. “What happened to the young alien who was so scared to be here?”

Adam smiles back at him. “I met you.”

He feels his chest ache. “Adam…”

“Your Hearts might change us, Will,” he says, reaching across the patio table, “But...we’ll still be friends, right?”

Will grabs his hand and stares as his skin turns more green. “We will, Adam. I promise.”

Adam goes home that night and Will decides that he’s got two options: ignore the feelings he has for Hannibal, his Heart; or attempt to court him and cement a bond.

Bonds are forever.

Is he willing to bond himself to a serial killing human?

Would he carry the children of someone like Hannibal?

Can he trust a man who would lie to him so severely and hurt people with such glee?

Will pets Winston, who rubs at his hand for more.

“I don't know what to do, guys,” he sighs, his claws scratching Winston’s head as his tentacles emerge to gently caress the other dogs around him, “I just don’t know.”

Day 6: Gaming

There is something about killing people who deserve it that never fails to put a smile on Will's face.

Which is why Will's a gamer.

The outrage as he takes them down, the laughs of the people in the room, and the DEAD going across the screen as his score goes up gives him a burst of serotonin that can't be replicated.

His handle, Dogstar666, he's used across many different games but his favorite is Kill/Count.

You get to pick from twelve different serial killers and go on a killing spree.

The higher your kill count the higher you get on the leaderboard, and Will's been number two for almost a year now.

Because of DantesInferno.

Dante has been his nemesis for the last three months, always killing Will no matter what side he plays, and it's starting to make Will not want to play at all. Kill/Count is something he does after the anxiety of work, a way to use the bits and pieces of serial killers that linger inside of him, and this asshole with the accent is ruining it.

"DogStar...I can see you."

Like now.

He’s playing one of the victims, hiding in a hallway, and according to the killcount list he’s the only one left.

“No, you can’t.”

“Yes...I can.”

The knife comes out of nowhere, right into WIll’s forehead, and his character falls to the ground as the words YOU DIED fill the screen.

He sighs.

“You can’t hide from me.”

Will sneers and turns off the Playstation, going to feed the dogs.

Fuck Dante.

He doesn’t need to play that stupid game.

There’s a lot of games.

So Will goes to other games like WarPlay, and KillerClub over the next week.

DantesInferno is there.

Every.

Single.

Time.

Will doesn't know how Dante knows where he's gonna do or what he's playing, even after he hides his status when they're not friends, but somehow he knows.

Which is why Will decides to message him for the first time.

I don't know how you're doing it, but please stop following me into every game I play. You have Kill/Count. You win. Just leave me alone.

The message he gets back is one he doesn't expect.

I enjoy playing against you. If I've ruined your experience I apologize. I just very much like killing you. I like the sounds you make in frustration, I like the sounds you make as you stalk and murder, and I just like the sound of your voice.

I'm sorry.

At thirty five years old Will's blushed plenty of times in his life.

But this makes him redder than he's ever been before.

Just let me win sometimes, Dante. Okay?

I promise I will.

My name is Hannibal, not that you asked but I prefer you to know it.

He smiles.

Will.

My name is Will.

Hello, Will.

Hello, Hannibal.

Will goes back into Kill/Count after the last message and Hannibal instantly joins the group he's going to kill.

"You can run, but you can't hide, Dante."

Hannibal's smooth, silky accent makes Will blush.

"Oh DogStar, trust me...I don't want to."

Will kills him last this time, using a knife, and when Hannibal falls his voice is like a purr in Will's headset.

"I do enjoy watching you work, DogStar. Care to play again?"

He smiles.

"You can kill me this time.

"I can't wait."

Neither can he.

Day 7: Arranged Marriage (Alternate)

Will stared at the envelope in his hand.

YOUR ARRANGEMENT

His whole body felt warm as he ran his thumb over the paper, and his chest ached as tears came to his eyes.

He'd expected this his whole life.

No one wanted an alpha with his issues, and judging by the people he'd dated until now he hadn't wanted them either. The last thirty five years seemed to play in his mind as he hesitated, and memories of his father's many drunken rants about the failed arrangement between him and Will's mother made him not want to open the letter at all.

Will closed his eyes.

Arrangements were government issued, yes, but they weren't permanent.

Not if the alpha's match didn't want it to be.

He took a deep breath and tore open the side of the envelope and a golden sheet of paper fell into his hand. His hands shook as he unfolded it, and the word at the top of the screen made his eyes widen.

No it couldn't be.

OMEGA

Omegas were so rare and treasured that only one in every hundred were arranged. An alpha getting an omega arrangement was like winning the mating lottery.

What kind of omega didn't already have a mate?

Apparently, Dr. Hannibal Lecter.

Will read his omega's file, warmth filling him as he stared at his picture, and the more he read the more confused Will became.

Hannibal was multilingual, a doctor, extremely fertile, and could cook?

Why wasn't he already mated?

He saw Hannibal's contact info and picked his cell phone off the table.

Was it too late to call?

Would Hannibal want him to call?

Or should he just wait until Hannibal called him?

They had a month to get to know each other before the mandatory mating deadline where Hannibal had to decide if he wanted him. It wasn't as if he needed to bother Hannibal right this minute.

Will put his phone down as the dogs started to bark. He sighed.

“Come on, guys,” he said, heading for the back.

He watched the dogs all run around in his yard, and imagined for a moment little kids among them.

Will shook his head.

It was too soon to think about.

He was just about to call the dogs inside when a scent wafted over to him.

Omega.

Will turned to see a man, hidden by shadows, walked into his backyard.

“Hey, what are…”

The man laughed as the dogs came up to him, and Will’s stomach flipped at the sound.

“I apologize,” he said, his accent obvious, “I could wait no longer.”

Will walked across the yard, heart beating wildly in his chest, and stopped when the moonlight lit up the stranger’s face.

It was Hannibal.

“You...you just...came over?”

He frowned.

“Did you want me to leave? I apologize again for the intrusion but I was quite affected by the sight of your face today and felt an overwhelming need to see you in person.”

Will swallowed. “Oh.”

Hannibal smiled and held out his hand.

“Dr. Hannibal Lecter,” he said, “It’s nice to meet you, Will.”

Will took his offered hand and shuddered as they touched.

“Will Graham,” he whispered, “It’s….nice to meet you too.”

Hannibal’s eyes flashed omega gold and Will felt his body react instantly.

“I think, perhaps, this arrangement will be just fine.”

Will smiled. “So do I.”

Day 8: Character Swap

“I don’t know why I keep coming here,” Hannibal whispered, staring off into the distance, “Everything you say is…”

“Accurate?” Will says, tapping the pen against his notebook, “Hannibal, you threatened someone today.”

“She was bothering the victims of a horrific crime.”

“And yet you were ok with threatening to murder her.”

“Anger can be expressed out loud but still be unacted upon, Dr. Graham. Isn’t that right? We’re creatures of anger and our own downfall at times but that doesn’t make us any less human. Does it?”

Will frowned. “You say that as if you’ve heard it before.”

Hannibal looked away. “Perhaps.”

“I’ve seen your file, Hannibal.”

“And?”

“I know about the orphanage,” Will said, “I know...about the boys you attacked there and I know about how they found you.”

He tried to hold in his tears. “Juvenile records are supposed to be sealed.”

“You weren’t charged,” Will said, “So it’s not sealed.”

“I do believe this session is over,” Hannibal whispered, getting up from his chair.

He needed to be away from this room, away from Will, and drown himself in other things.

“Do you still dream about her?” Will asked, making him pause, “About Mischa?”

Hannibal turned to glare at him. “Do NOT say that name.”

“Why?”

“Because, she...she is meant to be kept buried.”

“But she was never buried,” Will said, “Was she?”

Hannibal rushed to him, angrier than he’d ever been, and stopped just short of grabbing him.

“I don’t know what you want from me, Will, but…”

Will grabbed his hand. “I want you to push out the demons you’ve kept locked away inside you. I want you to...be the person you were meant to be. Not the scared, horrified little boy who grew up to drop out of medical school and run away to America to be an FBI agent but fail the tests to become one so he settled to teach them. You've been burying that poor little boy every single day since you ran away from her. Haven’t you?”

Hannibal grabbed the front of Will’s dime store suit coat and snarled as he stared down into his eyes.

“I don’t know what you’re trying to do, *Doctor* ,” he growled, “But I am never coming here again.”

Will frowned. “Hannibal, I just---”

He practically ran from Will’s miniscule office, ignoring the assistant outside, and drove as far from the building as fast as he could.

The need to tear someone’s skin from their bones burned into him as he drove, and he could hear the men laughing as they told him they’d fed him Mischa.

He’d been so scared of them then, and ran as far as he possibly could.

Had he wronged Mischa for not seeking vengeance?

Was there an angry, unsatisfied monster within him that needed to get justice?

Hannibal didn’t know, and he wasn’t sure he wanted to find out.

Day 9: Roommates

Will spent the majority of his high school career desperately waiting for college.

He hated his peers, his teachers, and pretty much everyone around him for four years, but college was an end goal he was sure would be the best thing that ever happened to him.

Then he got rejected from his first choice.

And his second.

And his third.

His fourth choice, Baltimore University, was not a bad place to learn but the programs there were lackluster at best. He wanted to work in the FBI, had since he was in grade school obsessed with the X-Files, and the programs just didn't do much for him.

But he applied anyway.

Which was why he was currently moving himself into a dorm on campus.

Dad was working all weekend, and had yelled out "double shifts" before Will finally gave up on any help coming from him. He knew he'd be fine, he had been on his own for most of his life already so this wasn't that big of a deal.

He lugged all of his boxes up one by one with no help, exhausted by the time he flopped down and spread eagle onto his bed.

Which was how Hannibal saw him the first time.

“Hello.”

Will opened his eyes, startled, and sat up. “Um….hey?”

The person standing in his door was taller than him with ashy blonde almost brown hair. His face was oddly angular and his eyes were just slightly red. He was dressed like someone out of a magazine in a three piece suit.

“You must be my roommate.”

“Yeah, I’m Will.”

Will tried to remember what the name was on his roommate assignment but couldn’t recall.

“Yes, I know,” his roommate said, “You look better in person than on social media.”

He blushed. “You looked at my instagram?”

“Yes, of course. I wanted to get a good feel for who you were.”

He watched this strange person start to put out fancy decorations and was surprised when men began walking into their dorm room carrying boxes.

“Um...they yours?”

“My uncle paid for movers.”

“I’m sorry but I don’t remember what your name was.”

His roommate smiled. “I know.”

“You’re not going to tell me.”

“It will come back to you.”

Will frowned, and watched the movers bring in more boxes but saw the labels on them.

“Lecter,” he said, “H...HANNIBAL!”

“See? I knew you’d remember.”

Will watched Hannibal walk across the room and begin to open boxes. “You could’ve just told me.”

“There’s not much fun in that, is there?”

He smiled. “I guess not.”

Hannibal turned to smile at him. “I think I’m going to like you, Will.”

“Why? Because I’m easy to tease?”

“No,” Hannibal said, sitting down on his bed again, “Because...you’re...unique.”

Will blushed again, pushing his glasses up on his nose. “Well...I don’t find you that interesting so…”

“Don’t worry,” Hannibal whispered, making him look up again, “You will.”

Day 10: Utopia

When the aliens came it felt like a nightmare.

Hundreds of ships just appeared all over the world in droves until there was nowhere to be away from them. The emergency broadcast system blared out warnings all day and Will sat with the pack in his living room glued to the screen.

But two days later the aliens declared their intentions. They wanted to give us cures for every disease and let us share in their technology on a planet called Caniba, their home planet that sounded nothing short of perfect. Every year fifteen people would be chosen at random for a month's vacation there with the option to stay.

No one ever returned from Caniba.

There were videos and pictures sent of humans there looking happy but no communications came back from them. The conspiracy theories ran rampant that the aliens were taking humans hostage, but the pictures and videos kept the governments from interfering. The Caniba aliens were sharing too good of tech for any country to want to sever their relationships.

Will dreaded the day he'd be chosen and every month when the lists were read he'd breathe a sigh of relief once more. It took four years for one of the names to be his.

He'd heard of people who refused being made to go anyway but still Will doesn't answer the first summons when it's delivered, or the next five.

Which is why they send a liaison.

One minute Will's asleep in bed and the next he's wide awake in a very nice office.

The alien sitting at the desk is dark blue with red eyes and wearing a red three piece suit.

"Hello, Mister Graham."

Will can't move.

"I don't want to go."

"I've gathered that from your dismissal of the numerous summons you've received."

"I know what you're doing."

"Do you? What *are* we doing, Will?"

Will glared at him. "You're killing them," he whispered, "No place can be that amazing for so many people to just give up their lives."

The alien leaned forward and laid his head in his hands on the desk as he smiled.

“You sound quite certain of this.”

“I’m not the only one.”

“We’ve seen the message boards, facebook groups, all that sort of thing. If our intentions were so diabolical why wouldn’t we suppress such talk?”

He blinked. “I...I don’t know.”

“It’s a privilege to be invited to come stay, Will. Many humans would envy you.”

“They can have my spot then.”

The alien sighed. “I’m sorry but that’s not possible.”

Will blinked back tears. “Please, just...I can’t leave my dogs. I...I…”

There was a flash and the alien teleported over to Will and put a hand on his face.

“Do you have an attachment to these creatures?”

Will wasn’t sure if he should say anything if it would be used against him.

But there were rumors that the Caniba could read minds.

He sighed and told the truth anyway. “Yes.”

The alien’s hand caressed his other cheek and his skin seemed to get warmer with every touch.

“If I secure space for your companions on the journey would you accept the invitation?”

Will let out a breath. “I…”

“How many companions do you have?”

“Seven.”

“You are full of compassion for these...things...so unlike yourself.”

He felt a tear fall down his face. “Yes.”

“You can bring your companions, Will. I will accompany you on your journey, and show you just why so many don’t come home.”

Will shook his head. “No, this...this has to be a trick.”

The alien smiled and his teeth were so pointed Will knew there was no way these Caniba were not eating humans. Why else would they need teeth that sharp?

“No trick, Will. You say yes now and bring your companions or say no….and be forced to go without them.”

Will closed his eyes. “Yes.”

The alien pressed two fingers on Will’s forehead and the warmth seemed to only get worse.

“I am overjoyed at your acceptance, Will. Caniba will be...an enlightening experience for you. No one who goes there ever remains the same.”

He opened his eyes slowly as whatever kept him from moving seemed to wear off.

“What’s your name?”

The alien smiled. “Han’bal. I look forward to seeing you again.”

Before Will could even say another word he was back in his own bed staring up in the dark.

The dogs all started to whine and rushed at the bed, obviously terrified at his disappearance. Will pet each and every one of them, making noises of comfort while his mind reeled.

He was going to Caniba as a special guest, and apparently had the ear of one of them.

Could that be enough to keep him alive in the end?

Or was this promised utopia actually the real thing?

Day 11: Summer Camp

Every year there was a tradition at Camp Wolf Trap for the newest counselor to tell the story.

This year it was Will Graham's.

"Has anyone heard of the Cannibal Slasher?"

The question causes scared murmurs among the kids as they sit around the fire, and a few of the other counselors share a smile with Will before he begins. He still remembers hearing the story when he was little, though he was told on his first day it changes with every telling, and he wants to scare the kids even more than he was so long ago.

"No?" he asks, poking the fire with a stick, "Well...it all started a long time ago when the camp wasn't even a camp at all. A rich family lived here, way out in the middle of nowhere, and were attacked by drifters. They killed the parents and the two kids, a boy and a girl, were taken.

The girl was young, kinda around your ages I guess?" he looks around, "And the boy was just starting high school. He wouldn't cry no matter what the drifters did to him, but they noticed he would get upset for his sister so they took her away.

The boy screamed for days, begging to see her, and the drifters didn't care. They refused to feed him, kept him locked up, and eventually after he had no voice left they gave him some soup. He ate it all up and the drifters started laughing at him.

'How did she taste?' they asked.

The boy went into a rage.

They’d killed her.

He had no one.

The monsters in his house didn’t have a chance.

No one saw the boy again after that and the house was torn down a long time ago by distant relatives, “he looks up and smirks at his fellow counselors, “But the story doesn’t end there. A wealthy businessman, Mr. Verger, decided to build a summer camp. Mr. Verger was hailed as a hero, and many parents let their kids come. But no one knew just how bad Mr. Verger was.

Or the things he would do to those first campers.

But the boy stopped him.

He stopped them all.

That very first night the screams echoed in the night while all eleven counselors at camp were brutally murdered and found missing...parts. No one knew who did it but they were thankful the kids were ok.

The massacre didn’t stop Mr. Verger’s sister from reopening the camp the following year where five counselors died. Police said the deaths were all ‘accidents’ and Camp Wolf Trap continued to thrive.”

A little boy, Timmy, raises his hand. “Did...did it happen again?”

Will shakes his head. “No, not ever again, though...there was Mister Chilton.”

The other counselors lean in a bit closer now, to hear Will's addition, and he wants to wow them so badly. He's thought about this, a little too much maybe, but it's gotta be great.

"Mister Chilton?" Andy, a little girl asks.

Will pokes the fire again and frowns. "Chilton worked for the Verger company's public relations, and he came to take pictures last year. He went cabin by cabin, setting up shots that would do good on the website, and it was in the very last cabin that they found him.

His body was completely unharmed from the looks of it at first, but when the police got closer they saw the blood coming from his mouth," he whispers, looking around now to see he had them all riveted, "Someone had ripped out his tongue."

Several gasps echo around him and he doesn't look up this time.

"But cannibal? You said…"

Will looks up slowly now. "What do you think he's doing with the parts? He eats them, just like he did his sister. They're being punished for taking his family home, and he'll keep on punishing...one part at a time."

A few of the kids clutch each other and he looks to the other counselors who all grin some even giving him a thumbs up. He nailed it.

The campfire is put out not long after, though some of the kids say they don't want to go to bed yet, and Will takes his cabin back to their door.

"Stay inside guys," he teases, "You never know when the Slasher might get hungry."

The littler ones run in fast after that, and he laughs to himself before heading back.

A celebratory drink is shared among the counselors, and they all go to bed that night laughing.

Will feels like he's finally part of the popular crowd, and even gets Molly Foster's foot brushing his own.

He falls asleep smiling.

And wakes up to screams.

Will grabs for his glasses in the dark, his flashlight falling, and hears everyone running to the door.

"RUN! IT'S HIM!"

He finds his glasses and runs, slipping in what he knows has to be blood, and has tears running down his face.

There are bodies on the grass outside, bodies everywhere, and he runs for the first camper cabin slamming his hands against the door. "LET ME IN! LET---"

No one's answering, and his fears rise just as more screams run out. Will runs into the forest, tears running down his face, and heads for the main office.

They need help.

The Cannibal Slasher is here.

He’s not just a story.

And Will might not survive the night.

Day 12: Fairy Tale

There was a monster in North Woods.

Or so the stories said.

Will, for one, didn't believe the stories of the 'monster in the dark' though his father forbade him from ever taking the North Woods to go into town. It was the quickest way for sure but he did as he was told.

Will respected his father and would obey him even if he thought the stories weren't real.

He went seventeen summers obeying his father until the storm.

The ride into town was a long one, especially at night, but Will's father expected him to sell their harvest each week. He was very good at packing up the rest of his wares before dark to make the trek home. But there was commotion over a thief stealing bread that Will couldn't help but sympathize with and he tried to stop Mr. Chilton from pursuing, which got him into his own scrimmage.

Chilton sold elixirs that Will was sure were fake and he'd never liked the man, but still he didn't want to be jailed so he didn't fight back when he was hit. Chilton knocked Will into the cart on the back of his horse, Winston, which topped most of his vegetables.

"They shouldn't let such low bred scum among us," he growled before stomping off.

No one bothered to help Will pick up, which only made it that much harder for him to get done before darkness fell. He was on the dark road when the storm started, drenching his tunic and the mud made the main road uninhabitable after a while.

He passed the entrance to the North Woods, shivering as he stared, and the quicker route called to him.

Will did not hesitate.

Winston seemed upset with him for the change, but soon Will soothed him though he could barely see into the trees. They got past the darkness and to Will's surprise the storm seemed to end. He pulled out his lantern, lighting the way, and nothing seemed frightening at all.

The North Woods were….beautiful.

Will felt comfortable among the trees, protected, and as he passed through nothing happened.

Nothing at all.

He got home faster than he ever had before, and when he stopped outside their home he almost missed it.

The claw marks.

Will was emptying the rest of their harvest, nearly finished, when he spotted the five long claws right in the side of the cart. He reached out to touch them and his whole body shivered.

Something had been following them, he knew that now, and yet it hadn't hurt them.

Will carved the marks away and didn't tell his father.

And he took the North Woods again.

And again.

And again.

And every time the marks were there.

He got to the marketplace before everyone else and came home with more money than he had in the last few seasons. People wondered at how he was coming there before they did, but he made sure not to be seen, and as weeks went by resentment came in the form of Frederick Chilton.

“I know you’re going through the Woods,” Chilton sneered, picking up one of Will’s tomatoes, “I’ve seen you.”

Will glared at him. “I have no idea what you speak of, Sir.”

Chilton tossed the tomato to the dirt and stomped his foot down hard. “This food is cursed,” he said, “And I’ll prove it, Graham. You low bred dirt need to know your place and it is not here among your betters.”

His anger seemed a living thing as he stared at Chilton, but he said nothing in return.

And still took to the Woods that night.

Will knew Chilton would follow him, the man himself had already confessed as such, but something told him this man wouldn’t be welcome. Though this time he waited until dark.

The lantern lit Will's way easily but the sound of Chilton behind him made Will slow Winston to a stop. He climbed down, his anger rising, and waited for the man to come to him.

Chilton jumped off his horse.

"Everyone will know when I leave here," he said, shaking his head as he smiled, "And you will be ruined."

"You're here as well, Sir," Will growled, "Will it not ruin you?"

"I'm a high born," Chilton said, puffing up his chest, "They won't care, but…" he pushed Will back, " *No one* cares about you."

Will stumbled back, grabbing onto the cart Winston held, and smiled at him as a howl rang out in the trees.

The creature who'd left the scratch was coming.

"I beg to differ, Ser," he whispered, "I think someone very much *does* care."

Will barely had a moment to savor the fear in Chilton's eyes. A large shape came out of the dark tearing into the man's neck with teeth as sharp as knives. The blood hit Will's cheek as Chilton fell, and he had to stop himself from running.

The creature wouldn't hurt him.

He knew it wouldn't.

The monster, pitch black with antlers that seemed majestically beautiful, turned its red gaze on him.

Will felt tears in his eyes.

“I’m not afraid,” he whispered, his voice shaking, I’m.... *I see you* .”

The monster touched his cheek almost lovingly before it disappeared into the darkness.

Will fell to his knees and touched his face smiling.

There was a monster in the North Woods.

But it wasn’t going to hurt him.

It just wanted to hurt everyone else.

And in that moment Will knew he wanted the monster to be his.

Day 13: Bad Horror Movie

Will wakes up slowly, his eyes hurting at the light, and he moans at the pain in his back.

“Where…?”

A warm hand touches his forehead. “You’ve been in an accident, Mister Graham. Luckily I spotted the car.”

He reaches out his hands and panics, realizing he’s tied down.

“What? Why can’t I…?”

The room is clearer now, and Will stares in fear at the man above him.

“I’ve restrained you for safety reasons,” the man says, wiping Will’s temple with something, “Many patients get...hysterical...in trauma situations.”

“I...I don’t remember any accident.”

The man, who is wearing white lab coat over what looks like a very expensive suit, frowns.

“Amnesia is also common.”

Will’s eyes fill with tears. “Who...who are you?”

“Doctor Hannibal Lecter.”

He pulls on the restraints again. “Let me out of this.”

“I’m sorry but I can’t do that,” Dr. Lecter says, touching Will’s cheek, “You’re not yet fit to leave, Will, and I wouldn’t be a very good physician if I were to let you go still injured.”

Will looks around the room. “Are we in a hospital?”

“My clinic.”

“How…?”

“I live not far from my office,” Dr. Lecter says, standing, “I drove you here as it’s much closer than the hospital.”

“This is...it feels wrong.”

He watches as Dr. Lecter walks around the room, and notices that everything is blue right down to the floor.

“You need to rest,” Dr. Lecter says, his back to Will as he stands in front of a cabinet, “You’ll feel better once you’ve rested.”

“I’m not…”

Dr. Lecter turns and Will stares wide eyed as he carries over a very large needle. Will struggles against his restraints and shouts.

“WHAT IS THAT?”

“It’s a sedative,” he purrs, stopping now, “Shh…”

Will fights but Dr. Lecter is stronger and once the needle goes in he feels his body relax. The world seems fuzzy as Will flops down on the hospital bed, eyes barely open, and stares at him.

“Y...you...you’re...not...right.”

Dr. Lecter touches Will’s cheek and smiles. “Sleep well, Will. I’ll see you in the morning.”

Will watches him get up to walk to the door, unlocking with a key, and the hallway outside looks nothing like a doctor’s office. There’s wood, tools, and as he stares at Will a loud scream erupts from somewhere Will can’t see.

The last words Will hears before he blacks out make him wonder if he’s ever gonna wake up again.

“I’ll take very good care of you.”

Day 14: Chefs

Will never should've opened a restaurant.

He knew that now, years later, as he struggled to keep customers while the neighborhood changed to upscale around him. 'Graham's Grub' was the last fast food joint in the downtown area and every place around was now a posh restaurant or upscale bistro.

The worst of them was 'La Viande.'

La Viande was a large upscale bistro at the end of the block owned by the most pretentious and infuriating man Will had ever met in his entire life. Hannibal Lecter had on more than one occasion had the nerve to invite Will to his bistro to "experience food the way it's meant to be eaten" like Will's food was garbage or something. He'd said no more times than he could count since La Viande opened up just two spots from Graham's Grub, and it seemed after a year the man didn't know how to take no for an answer.

He came every other week to offer Will dinner and Will would decline. Bev and Abigail, who worked behind the counter with him, thought it was "cute" while Will just thought it was annoying.

That week Will waited for Hannibal to appear all day, ready with a new comeback to his offer, and the strangest thing happened.

Hannibal didn't come.

Will walked outside and saw people going into La Viande and even spotted Hannibal's Bentley parked in the lot by the door. He came back in and worked the register for the rest of the day, ignoring Bev and Abby trying to "cheer him up."

He didn't need cheering up.

Hannibal not bothering him anymore was great. He didn't want that kind of attention anyway, especially from someone like him. He just wanted to make his hamburgers, hot dogs, fries, and chicken sandwiches in peace.

Will told himself Hannibal would come back in two weeks, just like always.

But he didn't.

He didn't even see him leave the restaurant or arrive, but the Bentley was always there.

"Maybe he's just busy," Bev said, wiping down the tables after closing, "I mean it's always busy there."

"Yeah," Abby said, counting the little bit of money they'd made today, "He'll be back in two weeks like always, I'm sure."

"I don't care," Will lied, fixing the ketchup bottles, "I'm glad he stopped bothering me."

"Uh huh," they both said, making him look up.

"What?"

"Will, you've been a thousand times grumpier than usual since he stopped a month ago. You look like a lost puppy every time you come in and stare outside at his fancy car."

He blushed. "No, I don't."

Bev smiled and leaned against the table. “You *like* him.”

“ *No,* I don’t.”

“Will…”

He grabbed the trash bag in one hand and knocked it into the wall as he stormed past them.

“I DO NOT LIKE HIM!”

The garbage dumpster outside was nearly full, ready to be picked up tomorrow, but he was able to fit that last bag in just as noise from his left made him turn.

Hannibal was tossing multiple bags in their dumpster and wore his apron along with a purple dress shirt. His sleeves were pulled up, showing off his forearms, and Will found it hard to look away.

He licked his lips just as Hannibal shut the dumpster lid and turned to look at him. There was no smile on his face, no flirtatious twinkle in his eyes, and Will hated the frown he gave before heading for the door.

Will ran down the alley.

“Hey, wait!”

Hannibal paused with his hand on the door. “Yes?”

“I...I haven’t seen you in a while.”

“I’ve been...rather busy.”

“Oh.”

“And I knew you didn’t want me to trouble you with unwanted invitations any longer.”

Will frowned. “I---”

Hannibal didn’t look at him as he opened the door.

“Goodnight, Will.”

The sound of La Viande’s door closing made Will’s chest ache.

“Oh.”

He *did* like Hannibal.

But now he’d probably lost all chances he had with him.

Day 15: Crossover

It’s surprisingly easy to hide in plain sight, and their life in New York is proof of that.

Their aliases, Dante and Mikel, are newlyweds who want privacy and rarely leave the house, which is just fine with Will. He wants to spend time with Hannibal, craves it, and knows that sooner rather than later his want will blossom into more.

Hannibal is different in New York yet exactly the same, and the months after the fall seem to blur together until neither of them can hold back. He makes the first move, a hand touch, entwining fingers and staring into Hannibal’s eyes, almost pleading with him to push them over the edge this time.

He does not disappoint.

Will moans as they kiss the first time, tears in his eyes, and when Hannibal lifts him up onto the table he gets lost in the feeling he’s denied himself so long.

Until someone bangs into their window outside dressed in an astronaut suit.

They pull apart, panting, and open the window to see a young man dangling from what looks like a rope holding a squeegee. He blinks at them both in surprise.

“You’re...I thought Beth lived here?”

“Um...no?”

“Oh.”

“Would you like to come in?” Hannibal asks, “I think staying out there much longer is bound to be dangerous.”

“I’m...gonna go find Beth’s window.”

Will sighs. “Come in,” he says, holding out his hands, “I think this Beth person wouldn’t want you out here anyway, kid.”

The young man frowns. “I’m not a kid, I’m twenty five years old.”

“Fine, you’re not a kid. Just please come inside before someone calls the cops.”

He seems to think about Will’s request for a second before taking his hand climbing into their apartment.

“Thank you,” he says, “I...I wanted to surprise her.”

“I think she would’ve been more than surprised.”

“I…”

Hannibal holds out his hand for their visitor. “Mikel Grielan, nice to meet you Mister…?”

The hand is taken with the same reluctance Will’s was, but he shakes it slowly.

“Adam,” he whispers, “Adam Raki.”

“This is my husband, Dante,” Hannibal says, “Please come in and have some tea.”

Will glares at Hannibal. What the hell does he think he's doing? The plan was to stay inside for a while, change their appearance, and not be found out. Literally inviting Adam into their house is a terrible fucking idea.

"Mikel, Adam probably…"

"I like tea," Adam says, sitting at their kitchen table, "And I am cold from being outside. The suit is warm but my face," he touches his face, "Is cold."

"Excellent," Hannibal says, smiling at Will, "Just give me a moment."

Will sighs and sits as far from their guest as he possibly can. He avoids looking at Adam straight on for fear he might recognize him. "So…"

"Are you married?" Adam asks, surprising him.

"Um," Will says, staring at the fake ring on his hand, "Yeah, we are."

"That's nice."

"Thank you."

"I've never been married," he says, looking around, "Or dated. My father says it's because I haven't found the right woman but I'm not even sure if I only like women. Some men are attractive too, and I've felt aroused looking at them."

Will blinks. "Oh, that's---"

"But I like Beth," Adam continues, "She was really nice to me and…"

He thinks for a second. “Wait...Beth? Is she a brunette?”

“There are lots of people with brown hair,” Adam says, “In this building alone there are four women with brown hair but Beth…”

“She’s one floor below us,” Will says, as Hannibal returns with mugs, “Kinda uppity and wears flowery perfume?”

Adam smiles. “Yes, that’s her.”

Hannibal and Will stare at each other.

They had an incident with this Beth woman the day they moved into the apartment when Will bumped her in the elevator. Her screams were so overblown as she yelled at him for ‘ruining her dress’ that he wanted to stab her in the eye right then and there. She has the number one spot on their kill list for when they moved on from here. Will remembers the sketches Hannibal did one night of the tableau they wanted to put her in before they left.

He sips his tea and locks eyes with Hannibal.

“Adam…”

“Beth is...rather...coarse,” Hannibal says, “Perhaps you may want to look elsewhere for a romantic companion.”

Adam frowns. “She was nice to me.”

“Yes, well…there are plenty of other nice people.”

He stares at the squeegee in his hand. “I don’t like talking to strangers, I’m not...very good at it.”

“You seem to be doing just fine with us.”

Adam looks up and smiles. “You’re both being very nice to me. Most people...aren’t nice to me.”

Will sighs. “Adam…”

He takes a sip of tea and they both share a look again.

Adam doesn’t need to get involved in their lives, but...maybe they need to get a little involved in his.

“I’m going to go home now,” Adam says suddenly, standing, “Thank you for the tea.”

“You’re quite welcome, Adam,” Hannibal says as they walk him to the door, “It’s been a pleasure.”

Will opens their door for him and he walks out into the hall. The smile he gives them makes Will’s heart ache. “I don’t have many friends,” he says, “But I’d like to be friends with the two of you.”

“We would be honored,” Hannibal finishes, putting his hand on Will’s shoulder, “Perhaps...you’d like to come to dinner sometime this week?”

Adam’s eyes widen a little. “I’d...yes.”

“We’ll contact you,” Will says, “Have a good night, Adam.”

“You don’t know my phone number,” Adam mumbles, “Or where I live.”

Hannibal leans in closer to Will and his breath tickles the back of Will’s neck.

“We’ll find you, Mr. Raki. No need to worry. Goodnight.”

They close the door and Hannibal turns Will against it, kissing him again. This kiss is softer, tender, and Will aches for the roughness again.

“That was...unexpected,” Hannibal whispers, touching his cheek, “But not unwelcome.”

Will smiles. “Which part?”

“All of it. I do believe we may have to eliminate the top of our list much sooner than expected. Wouldn’t want poor Adam to be too attached.”

He wraps his arms around Hannibal’s neck and smiles. “Just in time for dinner next week?”

Hannibal leans in to kiss his cheek. “You read my mind.”

He sighs. “Care to...pick up where we left off before we were interrupted?”

Hannibal licks his ear and Will shivers. “I thought you’d never ask.”

Day 16: Norse Mythology

Will's mother dies two days before the summer thaw. He finds her in a pool of her own blood, knife in hand, and her mouth is open in a scream. His father mourns her loss and buries her Magdalena, in a grave outside their home.

Will doesn't miss her at all.

He's much more interested in the way she died because no one believes him about the creature in his dreams.

Father made him stop talking of them years ago when Will was still a child, the Draugr, his fantastical undead monster seeking blood. The deaths that happened with mangled bodies were chalked up to wolves or bears.

No one wanted to believe in monsters.

Will cannot stop believing.

He's sure his delusions have kept him from a suitable match, a farm boy with thoughts of monsters in the dark was not marriage material. His dreams were not meant to be shared with anyone, only nightmares that by now were almost a comfort.

The monster in his dreams didn't terrorize him.

It welcomed him.

His fear had long since become more of a fascination, and he often ran with his monster chasing their prey. Will hadn't been asleep when his mother died, just gone with father at the

market, but he knew if he had he would've been right there beside the Dragur, as it feasted on her blood.

Will's mother hadn't been very kind to him, not ever since the day he was born, and he wonders if perhaps his monster knew this. Did his monster free him of her? Was this a gift?

Will had never seen its face of his monster, though he'd read many books on the stories of its terrifying visage: rotting skin, sharp teeth, and eyes that glowed red in the dark. The image did not at all frighten him.

Not anymore.

The old gods were long dead, as were their creatures, but he knew this one was real.

Would his monster slay a person of his choice if he asks it again?

He doesn't know.

But very much wants to find out.

Day 17: Wings

Everyone wanted to get their wings.

It was an event that was celebrated, sometimes even a little too much, and though many people might wait a lifetime they knew that with their wings they'd find something not many people had.

A soulmate.

Wings came in many different shapes, sizes, and colors, but with them you knew that your soulmate somewhere had the same wings too. Babies were born with them sometimes, while other people got them in adolescence or even early adulthood. Will's father didn't get his until he was in his late forties, and didn't end up meeting his soulmate until Will was already teaching at Quantico.

Though by then he only knew because he saw it online.

A feel good story about an older man whose soulmate was only in her late twenties but they were happy.

He hadn't spoken to his father in almost twenty years by then.

All because of his wings.

Will still remembered waking up with them one morning, excited to feel them at his back at nineteen, and running to the mirror only to frown.

His wings were unlike any he'd ever seen before.

They weren't colorful, bright, or even pretty.

No.

Will's wings were...broken.

They were almost wilting, skeletal, and devoid of color. Almost like someone had taken all the color and beauty out of them. Tears fell down his face as he reached out to touch them, and even the feel was leathery.

Like a monster.

His father must have known something was wrong because he came in to check on him and froze as he saw Will's wings.

"Will…"

Will still remembered the fear in his father's eyes as if it were yesterday.

What kind of a soulmate did Will have if these were his wings?

He didn't go to school for almost a week after that, and Will said nothing when his father told him to hide them.

"You don't want to find the person who shares those."

Will didn't argue, and tied his wings down till they were flat on his back. He wore bigger clothing for years, which made him look ridiculous, but even the teachers didn't seem to

care.

His father began to treat him differently after that. He didn't smile at him all that much anymore, and didn't take him out for fishing trips. It was almost like he was scared of him. Every person who took an interest in him sexually he rebuffed, and the isolation soon became commonplace.

And when Will joined the academy he had to tell his superior officer about them.

The chief told him the same thing his father had.

Hide them.

So he did.

For twenty years.

Though at night he'd take them out to stretch, and slept without them tied down. He never looked at them in mirrors, not if he could help it, though the dogs didn't seem to mind when he flexed them.

Will was fine like this.

Really he was.

Then one day sitting in Director Jack Crawford's office in walked Dr. Hannibal Lecter, who had the exact same wings Will had. He froze as he watched Hannibal walk across the room and sit in the chair beside him showing off his hideous wings like they were the most beautiful wings there ever could be.

And Will felt his wings flutter in their restraints at his back.

“Will, this is Dr. Lecter.”

He blinked.

“I…”

Hannibal held out his hand for Will to take and the minute they touched he saw Hannibal’s eyes widen.

“Hello, Will,” he whispered, “It’s...very nice to meet you.”

Will’s whole body ached for him, and he had tears in his eyes. “I...I have to…”

“Will, are you ok?”

He got up from his chair and ran out of the office in tears, shaking as he pressed the buttons on the elevator.

The numbers went down so slow as he stared, and he heard the door open behind him as Hannibal came near.

“Don’t,” Will whispered, “Just…”

Hannibal’s hand came to Will’s back and he felt his wings flutter through the large clothes that were meant to hide them. “Why do you hide them? I...I’d very much like to see them.”

Will closed his eyes, shaking, and was relieved when the door opened. He ran inside, pressing the buttons fast, but Hannibal was faster. He cursed when Hannibal got in just before the doors closed, and backed into the corner.

“Don’t touch me.”

“Will, this is supposed to be a beautiful event. I’m unsure as to why…”

“You can’t be serious!” Will laughed, “How...how do you just walk around with them out like that? No one’s ever told you how horrible they are? No one’s ever…”

Hannibal pressed the emergency stop button and the elevator lurched just before he pressed himself up against Will. He smelled like fresh water and sandalwood, both of which happened to be Will’s favorite scents. Will fought to push him off but he grabbed Will’s hands pushing them against the elevator wall.

“No,” he whispered, frowning, “Is that what they told you?”

Will felt tears fall down his face. “Y...yes.”

“I’m sorry,” Hannibal whispered, taking his hands, “That...that must’ve been so hard.”

“Please, just…”

“If you never wish to see me again I understand,” Hannibal said, “But...please...may I just...see them once? If only for a moment?”

Will sniffled. “You see them everyday, you...you have the same wings I do.”

He smiled. “Yes, but I’ve never seen the way they look on you.”

His heart skipped a beat. “I…I’m not sure I…”

Hannibal let his hands go to step back and Will relaxed still looking at Hannibal’s wings.

“You can say no, Will, but I just wished to ask.”

He sighed. “Okay.”

Hannibal watched him take off his suit coat and toss it to the floor. He blushed a little, feeling self conscious, but loosened his tie letting it go where the coat lay.

“This is…”

A noise made them both look at the speaker on the wall.

“Is there a problem?”

“No,” Hannibal said, “Just give us a moment. We’re...presenting.”

The word ‘presenting’ is not something Will would’ve ever expected to be about him. Soulmates often did a sort of look at each other’s wings upon meeting that was never private. Not like this.

“You can do that outside, fella.”

“No, I’m afraid we cannot.”

Will unbuttoned his shirt and stared at Hannibal whose eyes were obviously filled with desire. He realized this was about more than just a look, but didn't stop, and when he let his shirt fall the straps he used to hold down his wings were the last thing to go.

"Do you need help?"

He blushed. "No, I...I've done it a lot."

"May I help anyway?"

He felt his body react to the idea of Hannibal touching him and nodded turning around. The straps he'd had to make bigger as he grew, but they were still pretty much the same as they'd been that day twenty years ago. Will winced as Hannibal pulled on the first, letting out his wing, and then the second made the whole thing fall where his clothes lay.

Hannibal's gasp made Will turn around.

"Will…"

"I told you, they...they're just...they're ugly and they…"

Hannibal stepped closer and their wings brushed making Will moan.

"They're the most beautiful wings I've ever seen."

Will's cheeks were suddenly wet with tears as he smiled, and Hannibal reached out to wipe them away.

"You...you really think so?"

Hannibal pressed his forehead to Will's and he sighed. "Yes, I've...waited my whole life to see them and...they've magnificent. You...are magnificent."

Will couldn't stop crying.

"Yours are…"

"Hideous?" Hannibal whispered, smiling.

He stepped back and smiled. "No, they...I'm starting to see the appeal."

Hannibal beamed. "Thank you."

"I…"

"Do you need to get dressed again before I get us moving?"

Will shook his head, smiling. "No, I...I think I'm ok."

They left the elevator holding hands and Will was shirtless as their wings brushed all the way out the door.

Day 18: Pirate

It all begins when the Lecter family gets off the ship and steps foot on American soil for the first time. Hannibal is eleven then, the oldest of his parents' two children, and has a particular fondness for carving wooden figures. He found five different scraps of wood on their journey and carved them into various things: a cat, bird, heart, shoe, and even his sister Mischa. He gave Mischa her likeness before they got off the ship and though she was only five years of age she liked it very much.

He's carrying the others in his left hand when they head for the carriage that will take them to their new home when someone runs by knocking into him. The wood carvings fall to the ground, much to his dismay, and before Hannibal can get them someone snatches one taking off running.

"Hey!"

"Hannibal, stop that, we must---"

Hannibal ignores his mother and takes off running after the thief, a boy smaller than him who runs like the wind. His determination makes him follow on, knocking into people as they pass, and before long he's sure he's lost him.

"Hannibal!"

He goes to turn just before a movement out of the corner of his eye makes him see the thief was watching him still. Hannibal snarls and rushes forward, catching the other young man off guard knocking him to the ground.

The thief is not as small as he thought from far off, though perhaps his curls made him seem younger, and he fights Hannibal's hold spitting into his face.

"LET ME GO!"

“Give me back my carving!”

“I didn’t take any stupid carving from you, you stupid---”

Hannibal grips the thief’s hand and pries it open to reveal the heart he so carefully carved. He grabs it, pushing the thief down, and stands panting for breath. “Scum like you is why people are afraid to go out in the dark.”

“And rich brats like you are why people like me have to steal in the first place you stupid posh bastard.”

They glare at each other, not moving, and he’s just about to strike out when his father pulls on his shoulder. “WHAT ARE YOU DOING? ARE YOU MAD?”

Hannibal blushes, embarrassed, and shakes his head. “No, father I…”

He looks up and the thief is gone.

Hannibal never expects to see him again.

But he does.

Every time they come into town the thief is there, often snatching from the marketplace, but he doesn’t alert anyone. They share looks of distrust that soon turn to smiles, and his thief friend often shows off the skills he has.

His mother doesn’t notice him commiserating with anyone thankfully, but soon he’s given the freedom to buy things on his own while she looks at dresses for Mischa and he finds the thief lingering in the alley.

“Rich snobs shouldn’t hang around here,” he teases, smiling at him.

“I’m not a snob,” he frowns, “I merely…”

He holds out the heart, oddly important to him now, and gestures his hand forward.

“What?”

“I thought since you liked it so much you could have it.”

The blush on his mysterious friend’s cheeks makes his heart beat faster and their fingers brush when he takes it from Hannibal’s hand. “Thank you, I...I’m Will, Will Graham.”

“Hannibal Lecter,” he says, holding out his hand.

Will takes his hand and they shake.

“It’s nice to have a name for your smug rich snob face,” Will teases.

And those are the words that begin a friendship Hannibal didn’t know he needs, though it lasts only two years. He often takes his horse to see Will in secret, meeting for lunch in the park or even alleys where no one can see them.

He ignores the bruises and scars that Will gets after asking the first time, and they just enjoy each other’s company.

That is until the night his family is taken from him and he's whisked away from American life back home.

Hannibal doesn't step foot in America again until he's nearly one and thirty. He's a doctor then, newly graduated, and though he's heard bad things about Wolf Trap, the city he remembers so fondly, he goes there just the same.

Thankfully his ship does not run into the dreaded Reaper, pirate extraordinaire. It's said he's terrifyingly beautiful but deadly just the same. He takes no prisoners, his heart is tough as stone, and he likes to brutally tear into his victims on the high seas.

Even as a surgeon Hannibal can't imagine hurting someone purposefully, no matter how much he enjoys his profession.

Perhaps a bit too much.

He heads for the telegraph station, hoping to see if he can send a message to his uncle, and is just in time to hear the frightened whispers.

"I hear he's at the tavern," someone whispers, their voice shaking, "He broke a glass on someone's hand for not treating his men to free drinks."

"Oh goodness! I heard he's quite handsome to look at but no one has ever spent the evening with him and come out alive."

Hannibal frowns.

Are they talking about the Reaper?

He's preoccupied with the talk even as he sends a message to his Uncle Robertus, and finds heading for his waiting carriage.

Francis looks up as he comes near. “Sir?”

“I’m going to have a drink.”

Francis frowns. “I’ve...heard talk that it’s dangerous to go in at the moment.”

Hannibal nods. “Yes, so have I but...I want to try my luck still.”

“I could accompany you?”

“It’ll be just a moment.”

He walks into the tavern and hears the sound of men laughing instantly around someone with their back to him. The Reaper isn’t particularly muscled, or large at all, and his hair is a mess of curls that frame his face.

“You are a cad, Will!”

Hannibal blinks as a dog comes running up to the Reaper’s leg. He turns and smiles at the canine, and there’s no mistaking him.

It’s Will.

His thief.

He steps forward and calls out the name he’s sure will get attention. “Will Graham?”

Reaper turns and stares at him coldly. “Who the hell are you?”

Hannibal frowns. “You’ve forgotten me already? Am I no longer such a rich snob?”

Will’s eyes widen. “Hannibal?”

A dark haired woman puts her hand on Will’s shoulder and laughs. “ *That* is Hannibal? He’s…”

Will puts a hand over her mouth and gets up from his stool toward him with happiness all over his face. “You came back.”

Hannibal smiles. “Yes, and I didn’t get attacked by the fearsome Reaper.”

Will grins. “I’m not that fearsome.”

“No,” he whispers, looking at him fully now, “You...are not.”

They stare at each other for far too long, and his chest aches at seeing Will again.

No one has ever felt as needed in his life as Will did way back when, and without his family now there’s a hole that needs to be filled. Just standing in front of Will now he feels as if this is meant to be.

“I...I must go,” he says, pulling a pad of paper from his pocket, “But please,” he writes down his address, “Please call on me when you have the time.”

Will looks at the paper and frowns. “You don’t want me in this neighborhood, Hannibal. It’s…”

“Doctor Lecter,” Hannibal says, holding out his hand, “It’s Doctor Lecter now. And anyone who looks at you wrong will have to answer to me.”

Will smiles. “Okay, *Doctor* . We’ll see.”

“I hope you do come call, or perhaps I’ll have to find you on my own again.”

Will laughs and shakes his hand. “I’d like to see you try.”

They hold hands for longer than they should, and he sighs. “I must go.”

“Good evening, Doctor Lecter.”

“Good evening, Reaper.”

Hannibal looks back at Will twice as he heads for the door and the third time Will holds up something that makes his heart beat just as fast as it had so long ago.

His heart.

Will kept it.

He smiles.

They will see each other again, he knows it.

He knows it.

Day 19: Daemons

Will Graham was starting to think he'd be forever alone, which should've been just fine.

There was no need for him to have someone else in his life, not really. He liked not having to worry about the opinions of someone else, and really his dogs were all he needed.

Well, his dogs and Wilson.

Wilson was Will's daemon who took the form of a rather large tan wolf. He was intimidating to say the least, nearly towering over Will's head as they walked together, and the distrust Will had for other people made Wilson rather difficult to rein in at times.

He didn't talk, just growled, and whenever someone else's daemon tried to get close he often snapped at them.

That was until Wilson met Lilith, Dr. Hannibal Lecter's daemon.

Lilith was a black cat, much smaller than but larger than a domestic pet, and just as quiet as Wilson. She stalked into Jack Crawford's office by Dr. Lecter's side, surveying the room, and jumped into his lap when he sat down.

"Hello, Mr. Graham. It's very nice to meet you at last. I've heard great things."

Will frowned as the black cat hopped off his lap and came up to Wilson, who didn't growl. He just stared at it, almost mesmerized, and Will blushed looking away with a frown. "I haven't heard of you at all. I don't even know why you're here or who you are."

"Doctor Hannibal Lecter," he said, holding out his hand, "Jack wanted me to be here to help with the case of the missing girls, as my expertise into the minds of those who would commit

such crimes may be of service. If I'm making you uncomfortable, I can leave."

He looked at him again and took in the clothes he wore, which seemed plain and boring like he was attempting to look non-threatening. "Did you wear that for me?" Will asked, not taking his hand.

Hannibal blinked. "Pardon?"

"I don't think those are your normal clothes," he said, feeling anxiety seep in, "I…"

Wilson growled beside him and the black cat didn't move but made no move to get close.

"I assure you this is what I would normally---"

"Ah," Jack said, interrupting them, "I see you've met Hannibal."

"Yes," Will mumbled, pushing the glasses up on his face, "And I want to know why I'm even here if you have a shrink already consulting on this case."

"Hannibal is just here to be an extra---"

Winston and Hannibal's daemon came closer to each other, though the wolf still looked agitated. Will knew he was the reason, obviously, but still this weird thing with Hannibal's daemon was bothering him.

This wasn't like Winston, not at all.

He got up from his chair. "I don't know what's going on here, but I'm not staying. If you want me, Jack, you know where to find me."

“Will!”

Will rushed out of the room, shaking with something he couldn’t name, and Winston brushed his shoulder as they waited for the elevator. He closed his eyes, taking a breath, and was just about to talk to him when Hannibal’s voice interrupted.

“Mr. Graham, I’m sorry if my presence has upset you, that wasn’t my intent.”

He balled his fists up and tried to remain calm. “I know he has you here to...babysit me...because they think I’m unstable. I’m not about to just let some shrink tell me what to do or how to feel.”

Hannibal’s daemon came over to Will and rubbed on his leg, much to his surprise. “Lilith is...quiet...but she knows when she’s needed.”

“She doesn’t know me.”

“No, but I’m comfortable in your presence. That’s more than enough.”

Will frowned at him. “I’m not comfortable in yours.”

“I’m aware, which is why I told Jack I’ll be sitting this one out.”

He blinked. “Oh.”

“But,” he said, reaching into his pocket to hand Will a business card, “Jack does want you to...be evaluated. It will just be one sitting, I promise you. Purely for show, because even the small amount of time I spent in your presence made it abundantly clear that you’re not unstable.”

Will took the card and blushed. “Um, thanks.”

Hannibal nodded, and the doors opened. “I’ll be taking my leave. I hope the case goes well.”

He watched him and Lilith get into the elevator, and the cat brushed Winston as she went by. Will felt the touch, and he was sure Hannibal did too judging by his smile.

“Thanks,” he said, “I...I’ll call.”

“I hope so.”

The doors closed and Will stared at them for a second before pressing the button. Hannibal seemed surprised when they opened. “Will?”

“You can stay,” he said, his voice shaking a little, “More people is always good, right?”

Hannibal’s smile widened. “Yes, I suppose so.”

He turned and headed for the office again, and saw their daemons brush by each other as they entered walking side by side.

Will could feel the touch, and she even brushed his hand as it dangled over the side of the chair as he sat down.

Jack raised an eyebrow at the two of them. “I take it things are all worked out?”

“Yeah, Jack,” Will said, blushing a little as he pushed his glasses up again to look at Hannibal, “I think...we’ll work together just fine.”

Day 20: Dystopia

The end of the world didn't happen all at once.

It started to crumble in stages.

War.

Hunger.

Destruction.

Acceptance.

Will lost so much in those first few years, not that he had much, but he grew tougher with each life he took and protected his pack with everything in him until his reputation grew. He was known mostly as Graham by the fourth year after the Crumble, had connections all over that he trusted, and kept out of trouble unless it found him first.

He didn't want to be a leader, not really, but when a nest of Groupers tried to overtake Wolf Trap his pack helped crush them until he was head of that territory fast.

His pack was larger by then sixteen by his last count, and all fully trained killers that answered to him alone. Will kept quiet after he took over, and then rumors started to surface.

About The Ripper.

No one knew him yet everyone seemed to, and the fear that rose in his people began to bother him.

Ripper might have his own territory but he wouldn't be stupid enough to go after Will's.

Would he? Will was settled here, happy, and his people didn't bother anyone. They didn't have much but it was enough.

The Groupers, ravenous beings that were said to be infected, were scarce here now because of him. He didn't need the Ripper's crew to bring the infection back again.

"You should crush him. I doubt he's as scary as he seems."

Will ran his hand over Winston's head and stared out at the people in his crew. Good people, strong warriors, who all were loyal to him and Wolf Trap itself. He trusted them to take care of his people if something happened, he really did, so maybe he should go see this Ripper himself.

"I could take the pack to see him."

Bev, his best gunner, frowned. "Alone, Graham?"

He shrugged. "I've dealt with a lot of people alone."

"Yeah but---"

"Do we still have gas in that old Chevy outside?"

"Gassed her up good just an hour ago, but maybe someone should come with you."

Will smiled. “Someone will be,” he said, looking at his pack around him, “Who wants to go for a ride?”

The dogs all sat up, excited, and he went to arm himself. He knew he shouldn’t go there with thoughts of a fight, but better safe than sorry. Will led the dogs to the only vehicle they still had that could make it even a few miles, a Chevy truck that had seen better days. He got the dogs in and started down the road toward the Ripper’s territory.

They wouldn’t be welcome, he knew that, but something told him this was the best idea he’d ever had.

No one knew much about the Ripper, other than his own people, and Will wasn’t scared.

His pack was the most fearsome in miles.

The Ripper was one man.

How scary could he be?

Day 21: Soulmates

His soul word appears on Will's arm when he's twelve years old, and he goes to the library to look up the meaning because it's one he's never heard before.

Mylimasis.

Everyone's soul word is different.

Some people get names.

Some people get designs.

Some even get dates.

Will's word means 'Beloved' according to "Book of Endearments" he finds out on display at the library for moments such as this. It's Lithuanian, which means his soulmate probably comes from there, and Will smiles when he looks at the word after that. He's excited to meet his soulmate, someone who will understand him, and as the years go by it's something he holds onto for dear life.

Somewhere there's someone who has to want him.

They'll be halves of the same soul.

The day he meets Hannibal Lecter his soul word burns into his arm and he's horrified.

A shrink?

Someone who will dissect his mind and try to fix him?

He leaves Jack's office in tears, ignoring Hannibal's calls, and though he knows how important the case is he doesn't want anything to do with Dr. Hannibal Lecter. If this is his soulmate, he doesn't want one.

But Hannibal isn't deterred.

There are things left on his porch when he refuses to answer the door, little notes and even gifts for the dogs after a while. Hannibal seems to understand his reluctance, and after a few weeks Will opens the door.

He looks up as he's setting down a small box and smiles. "Hello, Will."

Will frowns. "Hello, Doctor Lecter."

Hannibal rolls up his arm and turns to show it to Will.

'Doctor Lecter' is written on his arm just where Will's is, and his heart skips a beat.

"I…"

He nods. "I know your use of my professional moniker wasn't meant as an endearment but...it was still nice to hear."

Will blushes, touching his own soul word through his shirt. "Um…"

“May I see yours?”

Will shakes his head. “I’m not really comfortable yet.”

“That’s perfectly understandable.”

He sighs. “You wanna come in?”

Hannibal’s eyes light up as he nods, picking up the box on Will’s porch. “Yes, I’d like that very much.”

He steps foot into the house and the dogs swarm, but Will watches him take the attention in stride. “Hello there,” he says, petting each head, “Nice to meet you.”

Will keeps walking to the kitchen, expecting him to follow, and eventually he does.

“I see you already have a found family of your own.”

“Yeah,” he sighs, starting the tea kettle, “Look, Hannibal I…”

“I’m not going to push,” Hannibal says, frowning as he sits, “I merely wanted to show you I’m not your enemy.”

“I know.”

“And I am very happy to have found you.”

Will blushes and turns to look at him again. “I’m...less unhappy.”

Hannibal nods. “That’s enough for now.”

“Jack probably told you about all my---”

“I told Jack not to tell me anything after you left, but I surmised from your reaction that you don’t trust psychiatry. Jack already told me about your gift to empathize with killers.”

“It’s not a gift.”

“To you perhaps, but it’s still special and needed. Will…”

The tea kettle goes off and Will walks to the cabinet for the bags, still anxious.

“Do you want tea? I should’ve asked but I…”

Hannibal’s hand comes to his shoulder and he turns, startled. “I...I’m sorry. Your worry feels heavy in the air.”

Will blinks. “What?”

“Can you not feel it?”

He lets out a long breath and feels a sort of pull toward Hannibal that’s so strong he nearly falls over. “That’s…”

“A prebond,” Hannibal says, “I...I think perhaps I should go. I wouldn't want to overwhelm you so soon.”

Will swallows, shaking, and reaches out to touch his bare forearm over the soul words. Hannibal shivers and Will can’t help but pull up his own sleeve as their soul words touch.

“Mylimasis,” Hannibal says, his accent suddenly thicker than normal, “I...yes I...yes.”

“You can go,” Will whispers, his voice thick, “Or you can stay. I...I feel it too.”

“Will…”

“Hannibal…”

Hannibal kisses him so softly then, the touch feather light, and when he pulls back Will feels oddly rejected.

“I will return,” Hannibal says, nodding, “I...I suppose I have to, don’t I?”

“No,” Will says, “You can do whatever you want, I’m not…”

Hannibal smiles. “That wasn’t me lamenting the idea, Will, I promise you. I am just quite overwhelmed at this feeling. I should leave before it gets too much to control.”

Will nods and he watches him leave, still feeling the bond between them even after he’s out of the house. He slides down to the kitchen floor and the dogs all come running to lick at his face and hands.

He barely feels any of them.

He’s found out who will call him Mylimasis.

And already wants to hear him say it over and over again.

Day 22: Theatre

The first time Will Graham saw Hannibal Lecter he was seventeen years old.

His father had gotten free tickets to The Ripper, the hottest play in town based on the infamous murder spree in Italy about ten years ago, as payment for a side job he was doing in town and Will was so excited to see THE Hannibal Lecter in action. He was mesmerized by Hannibal's performance, enthralled, and by the time it was over begged his father to take him to the back for an autograph.

"Lots of people go back there, Willy," his dad said, frowning, "He might not notice you at all."

Will didn't mind. He stood in the midst of a sea of admirers and watched Hannibal sign autographs. He announced he had to go, and was about to leave when he turned to see Will looking crestfallen.

He walked up, grabbed Will's playbill, and smiled.

"Did you think I'd forgotten you?"

Will blushed, shaking his head, and was so starry eyed he almost didn't give Hannibal his name.

"Will," Hannibal said, his smile widening, "I hope you enjoyed the show."

"I loved it," Will said breathlessly, "You really *were* The Ripper."

Hannibal chuckled and patted Will's hand. "Thank you, Will. That is a very high compliment."

Will nearly melted, not able to say anything else, and watched him go back inside.

Fifteen years later Will Graham was still starstruck when he saw Hannibal Lecter again. Time had been good to Hannibal, though he'd since given up on acting and retired. Though the reason for this next meeting was oddly connected to the last.

Hannibal's housekeeper had been murdered and it seemed to be by the Ripper himself.

Will walked into the scene behind Jack and watched Hannibal's every move, still a little enthralled by him, and hoped he didn't blush. Jack asked the questions, and Will pulled himself away from Hannibal to survey the scene.

It was a Ripper murder, obvious in its design, and Will wondered why the infamous Italian killer would come out of so long a retirement.

He could almost feel the rage, the annoyance, and knew the Ripper wasn't happy with this woman.

Not at all.

Will got so lost in trying to understand the scene he didn't notice he had company.

"She was...sloppy. I won't say she'll be missed."

He jumped, startled, and Hannibal was so close he couldn't help but blush. "Um, you're not supposed to come over the line."

"Oh, I...wasn't aware. I...have we met before?" Hannibal asked, his eyes narrowing, "You seem very familiar."

Will blushed harder, pushing his glasses up on his nose. “No, I don’t…”

Hannibal reached for Will’s hand, as if studying it, and smiled.

“Will,” he whispered, “Did you think I’d forgotten you?”

Will’s heart skipped a beat. “You...you remember me?”

“Yes, you...gave me a very specific compliment. I never got it since, not by anyone, and...it stayed with me.”

Will swallowed past the lump in his throat. “I…”

“Will! Get over here!”

He pulled himself away. “I have to---”

Hannibal smiled. “Of course.”

Will headed for Jack, still flustered, and looked back once more.

Hannibal remembered him.

He smiled at him.

Hannibal smiled back.

It was probably a bad idea to get friendly with someone involved in such a grizzly murder but he couldn’t help the happiness that burrowed into him.

THE Hannibal Lecter remembered him from a random encounter fifteen years ago.

He just couldn’t believe it.

Day 23: Historical Fantasy

Every seventeen years an amazing thing happened.

A witch was born.

Everyone waited to see who would get the honor of having a witch in their family and hoped that they were chosen. Who wouldn't want to be chosen to receive such a gift? The royal families would come to call and bestow upon you riches beyond your wildest dreams.

All you had to do was lose a child.

But your child would be betrothed to the witch who came before them.

The year that Will Graham was born everyone hoped they were given the gift that year but strangely enough no child was born with magic anywhere.

Not one.

The royal family was shocked, dismayed, and their son who was now just shy of his seventeenth year insisted to everyone who would listen that he could *feel* the other magic user. He knew they were there, and yet no one believed him.

Seventeen years later Will Graham woke up on fire.

He didn't understand it, running from the cottage he shared with his father, and watched in horror as the home he'd been raised in went up in flames. The flames went down from his person, and Will stared out at his neighbors in tears completely naked.

“I...I didn’t mean it.”

The royal family came at once after he was escorted to the constable, wearing only a blanket and nothing else. Will was in tears but no one would come near him and when the door burst open he looked up to see a man much older than him staring at him in wonder.

“I knew it.”

The man smiled, knelt by his side, and tears began to pour down Will’s cheeks.

“Who are you?”

“A lonely king who has waited for the only one he wants to do magic with.”

Will shook his head. “I...I never want to do magic again, Ser. I…”

The strange man, who Will realized must be the King now after so many years, took both Will’s hands in his.

“I promise you,” he whispered, “I will show you the joy that magic can bring.”

Will felt tears fall down his cheeks.

“I don’t know how, I...Your Majesty, I…”

“Hannibal,” The King whispered, kissing Will’s hands, “My name is Hannibal. Please, tell me yours.”

“Will,” he whispered, “My name is Will.”

Hannibal smiled. “Hello, Will. I’ve waited to meet you for a very long time.”

Will suddenly felt a rush of something come through him and the fear melted away. “I...I think I’ve waited for you too.”

Day 24: Gangs

There was an unspoken rule no one talked about in Wolf Trap, yet everyone knew it.

If you need help, go to Dr. Lecter.

Need money? He'd give it to you.

Need to get someone off your back? He'd make them wish they never even looked your way.

Need some place to stay? He'd find you a place.

There were other means of finding help, yes, but the others would ask for things in return and often make you a part of their 'house.' Dr. Lecter never asked for anything, and yet had a loyal house that would follow him anywhere.

The day Will Graham stepped foot into Dr. Lecter's office he was a scared nineteen year old desperately struggling with a father who hurt him and blamed him for his mother running off. He had a black eye, fat lip, and blood on his hands.

"I killed him," Will whispered, shaking, "I...I did it, and I'd...do it again."

Dr. Lecter smiled at Will. "Yes, I think you would."

His nurses came over to Will, ready to tend to him, but Dr. Lecter stopped them in their tracks.

"I'll look after this one myself," he whispered, "Get it done."

They nodded and he was ushered into an exam room where his wounds were treated. His hands Dr. Lecter left for last, and when he was done he frowned at him.

“What is your name?”

“Will Graham,” he whispered, tears falling down his face, “I...I couldn’t take it anymore.”

“I’m so sorry you had to endure such pain,” Dr. Lecter said, touching his cheek, “I wish you would’ve come to me sooner.”

Will’s lip quivered. “I was scared, I...I don’t have any money and…”

“I’ll never ask for anything from you, Will, not one thing,” Dr. Lecter said, “And protect you with my life.”

From that moment forward Will Graham pledged his allegiance to Dr. Lecter, even as he pined deeply to be closer to him, and kept himself at a distance.

He had no idea that ten years later he’d be part of Hannibal’s inner circle, and in his bed.

The story of how he got there, well, that’s a very interesting indeed.

Day 25: Time Travel

They fell together, locked in an eternal embrace, and once they hit the water Hannibal expected never to open his eyes again.

But he woke up fast, as if in a dream, and looked around a very familiar room.

His own.

He climbed out of bed, taking in everything being in its familiar place, and by the time he went through every room in his home he knew something strange had happened.

The year two thousand and thirteen, and today was the day he was to meet Will Graham for the first time.

Somehow fate had given him a second chance.

Hannibal would not let this go to waste.

Not again.

Hannibal dressed in the same clothes he still remembered so vividly, and went to Jack's office nearly shaking with need to see Will again with his own two eyes. He walked into the office and spotted Will's profile and stood in the doorway at the sight of him.

"Good morning," Jack said, making Will turn.

There was no recognition in Will's eyes at seeing him, and his chest ached to have all that time forgotten.

But he'd make Will see him again.

And this time, he'd never let him go.

Day 26: School of Magic

Will can still almost feel him in the walls of the School of Magic, years later, and wonders if he should've told Jack no when asked to teach Magic Defense class this year. He hasn't been back in these halls since his seventh year, and as he steps foot into what is to be his classroom for the year he wishes he hadn't.

He was a boy then, a pretty stupid one, but the man he is now still misses him.

"Thinking about your 'Other Half'?" Jack asks, making Will startle as he walks in.

The Headmaster still looks the same age he did when Will graduated almost twenty years ago, and when he conjures himself a seat Will can feel the strength of his magic easily. He spent five years trying to turn it off, his magic mimic, but the lure has never left him.

"You talk as if I ever stopped," he jokes, sitting down at his desk.

"Will, if you think you shouldn't be here…"

Will smiles, his eyes a little wet but no tears there.

Not yet.

He'll save them for when he's alone.

"I *need* to be here, Jack," he says, his voice shaking, "Since that night...all I've felt is him and I know he's dead. It's not possible to feel him."

“Will…”

He wipes his eyes with the back of his hand. “He called us ‘two halves of the same soul,’ so maybe I just internalized it.”

“Or maybe he’s not gone.”

Will frowns at him. “What?”

Jack sighs. “There are still factions of his followers all over, hidden and waiting. They think he’s alive.”

Will shakes his head. “I watched him die!” he almost yells, “I know he’s dead!”

“But---”

He stands, grabbing his wand, and the sparks that come off it are obviously angry.

“You asked me here, Headmaster, don’t go spouting off theories like my evil dead first boyfriend is coming back to life. It took me years to even get to the place I’m in now, Jack. *Years* . I can’t...I can’t do this again.”

Jack touches his shoulder. “I know, Will. I was there that night, remember?”

Will can hardly see through his tears but he doesn’t wipe them away.

“He’s gone,” he whispers, “I know he’s gone.”

“You’d know more than anyone.”

Will nods. “Can...can you just let me be alone for the next few days before the session starts? I need to settle.”

Jack gets up from his chair and it dissolves away as he walks toward the door.

“Will.”

“Yeah?”

“Do you ever feel him still? Even if it’s a phantom pain?”

Will wipes at his eyes, shaking his head, and lies right to Jack’s face.

“No, I don’t feel him at all.”

Jack nods once and the door closes behind him.

Will rolls up his sleeve and traces the mark left on his inner wrist made by Hannibal Lecter twenty five years ago. It’s their mark, the one they shared, and it ‘bound’ them to one another.

He’d been so happy.

“My other half,” he whispers, “My...beloved.”

The mark almost feels warm as he touches it, but he knows it’s just because he’s here again. Hannibal Lecter, the seventh year student who tried to take down the School of Magic, has

been dead for twenty years and he’s not coming back.

Will should know.

He was the one who killed him.

Day 27: Royalty

Will Graham had a theory that he knew no one would believe.

And it was about Prince Hannibal, the heir to the throne of Lithuania.

The Prince was well loved all over the world, constantly in magazines and even those news shows where they'd interview him about his philanthropic endeavors while hinting at his love life. Prince Hannibal would be coy, flirt around the question, and move onto another without giving away much. He was, as they dubbed him, the 'Perfect Prince.'

He was a pro at misdirection, and if Will was right about his theory...he always had been.

Because Prince Hannibal was a serial killer.

Every country he'd "visit" he'd leave behind a series of bodies with no DNA or even a motive. They'd all scramble trying to figure out who was behind them, and then he'd fly home where it seemed he never killed anyone.

He'd often go through periods of hibernation where he didn't kill anyone, but Will would watch it all start up again. The pattern was so obvious that either Hannibal had everyone so mesmerized or Will himself was going slightly mad.

There were books all over Will's house filled with seven years worth of his findings all over the house but thankfully no one came to visit.

That was until a charity event brought Prince Hannibal Lecter to Baltimore, and a woman was found brutally murdered hanging in an elaborate tableau in broad daylight. Will was determined to find proof that the 'Perfect Prince' was a monster in disguise before he left the country again, and knew he had every little time until someone was killed again.

It was just his bad luck when Jack Crawford knocked on his door less than seven days after the first murder to tell him there was a second.

Will didn't move to let him in, knowing the mess inside would be hard to explain.

"Who was it this time?"

Jack sighed. "Freddie Lounds."

Will blinked. "Oh."

"She was...uh...found sitting outside the balcony where Prince Hannibal is staying. The poor man was traumatized to find her there, obviously, but he's said he'll talk to us."

Will almost smiled.

This was perfect.

He'd get to see the 'Perfect Prince' in person now, and maybe even be able to figure out exactly what his 'design' was. The other murder had given him nothing, but this? This would give him everything.

"I'll be right out."

Will locked the door and turned to see Hannibal's face smiling at him from one of the photos on his wall.

"I'll get you," he whispered, touching his face, "I will."

The picture seemed to almost laugh at him but he didn’t care.

This would finally be over soon.

As he headed upstairs to change little did he know it was far from over.

It was just the beginning.

Day 28: Werewolf

There were many things Will's father taught him over the years.

Don't trust the government.

Always bait your hook.

Keep calm.

And never, ever tell anyone you're a werewolf.

Will had a lonely childhood because of these things, he got his GED when he was sixteen he never went to public school, and an even lonelier adulthood. But once his father died he filled the void of him being gone with stray dogs that soon became a pack larger than any he'd ever had. They'd run in the woods behind his house, hunt together, and play with him even in his large wolf form.

He wasn't unhappy, but he wasn't complete either.

Wolves, even weres, were meant to have a mate.

Will knew he never would.

He didn't go looking for a human, or even other creature that might go bump in the night. Any sexual needs he had were filled by his own hand or a toy.

It was enough.

Will never expected to have any other options.

Then one quiet night in late summer, he heard a howl echo in the woods behind his house. The wolf sounded terrified, scared, and Will found himself half shifted even before he got out the door to find it.

He followed the sound of its cries but soon caught the scent, and rushed to find the source.

The source ended up being a baby wolf being preyed upon by a hunter.

Will's growl startled the human whose eyes grew wide just before he tore him apart. The death wasn't clean but it was quick, and Will turned to see the baby wolf was no longer just a wolf.

She had to be at least five, huddled with her arms tight to her legs, and she growled when he got near.

He shifted and crouched down holding out his hand.

"Hey there," he whispered, unable to believe this was happening.

His father told him there were no more werewolves but the two of them.

He'd obviously lied.

The little wolf came closer and sniffed at his hand.

“It’s okay, you’re safe now.”

She looked up at him and burst into tears. “I need Hanni! Where is Hanni!?”

Will shook his head. “I don’t---”

A low growl made Will freeze, and turned in time to see they weren’t alone.

A large gray werewolf stood angrily behind him.

Will held out his hands and backed away. “I’m not…”

The little wolf ran to the were who was more than likely ‘Hanni’ and was cuddled in his arms. Will let out a sigh of relief and breathed in just as a sudden scent caught him.

“Oh.”

The other werewolf shifted into a man, and blinked at Will in surprise.

“You saved her.”

“I...you...can you smell me?”

The werewolf breathed in, his eyes turning red, and growled. “Mate.”

“Yeah, I---”

“Stay away from us,” the werewolf growled.

The wolf shifted again and took off with the little wolf on his back. Will knew he wasn’t invited to follow.

There were more werewolves in the world, and apparently he’d found his mate who wanted nothing to do with him.

Day 29: Pretend Relationship

Hannibal is holding a letter in his hands when Will comes into the office, and the look on his face makes it obvious he's concerned.

"Hannibal?"

He looks up, blinks, and checks the clock. "Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't realize how much time had passed."

"I've been knocking on the door for a while," Will mumbles, standing there awkwardly, "Did something happen? Do you want me to go?"

Hannibal shakes his head. "No, I...I've had some news and canceled my last few appointments. I thought I'd called you but apparently I did not."

Will sits in the chair across from him. "What's wrong?"

He sighs. "A letter came today from a woman professing that she's my fiance and that we are to be married within the month as per an agreement my parents signed when I was still an infant."

Will frowns. "Oh."

"My uncle and aunt have long since died but neither of them have ever mentioned this person to me, and she's sent papers along with her letter that bear my parents' signatures. She's a Duchess of some kind apparently, and her parents are quite overjoyed to have me enter their family."

"You don't look so overjoyed."

Hannibal frowns. "No, I'd...I would rather not be forced into a marriage to a stranger because of the wishes of my parents, but it seems rather binding."

Will pushes his glasses up on his nose. "I mean...can't you just tell her you're already engaged?"

He sighs. "To whom could I use in that way, Will? I couldn't ask that of someone. She's meant to come visit apparently in a week. Ms. Carolina Balkus is apparently desperate to unite us before she's too old to have children."

Will's stomach churns as realizes what he's about to do.

Hannibal is his friend.

He can't let something like this happen to him.

It wasn't like they HAD to get married.

Will lets out a breath, takes the paper from him, and reads the name at the bottom.

“Carolina.”

“She’s apparently nearing her forties, and she….”

Will looks up at him over the letter. “I can do it,” he says, his voice shaking, “I...I’ll be your fiance.”

Hannibal blinks. “You?”

“Yeah,” Will says, looking down at the words again even though they seem to blur, “I...I can do it. It won’t be hard, right? We already like each other and it’s just a little lie.”

“Will…”

He crumbles the paper up in his hand and tosses it behind him before taking Hannibal’s hands.

“Let me help you, Hannibal. Please? This would be the least of my problems with all that’s been going on. Pretending to be in love with you would honestly be the easiest thing in my life right now.”

Hannibal lets out a long breath and smiles. “I...I would be honored to pretend to be in love with you, Mr. Graham.”

Will smiles. “So I guess that’s it then,” he laughs, “We’re officially engaged.”

Their smiles widen.

Will knew it might be a little awkward at first, but honestly….how bad could it really be?

Day 30: The Day The World Died

They were together when everything started, and that's the one thing Will is grateful for after all these years. If they hadn't been, he knows now things would have gone so differently.

It's a decade after their fall and years after they give into their feelings when the world ends.

There's not much to it, not really, and yes things change but they're both hunters by then. Will refuses to let Hannibal leave his side in the beginning and even still to this day. He won't lose him, not again, and yes people know them by now but that doesn't stop everyone.

The Rippers are feared, but some people are fearless.

They're protected behind plenty of security in the beginning, but the electricity doesn't last and their larder needs to be replenished. Thankfully there's the fearless ones, the reckless few, and they make for good nourishment.

"You'd think they would've learned by now."

Will smiles at him over every dinner still, even under candlelight. They've run out of fancy soaps and stopped caring about their appearances long ago but there's still no one as handsome as the one beside him.

"Lucky us."

They're both older, wiser, but still deadly.

The world ending just makes it all that much easier to hunt.

And no one can stand in their way.

Day 31: Pick Two AUs - Werewolf/Ancient Gods

Every day that Will comes home from work he finds at least fifteen gifts on his porch.

They're all nice gifts, really they are, but he usually throws them into a box that he donates at the end of the week.

Sometimes it really sucks being an omegan werewolf.

Will sighs as he grabs today's gift boxes, and goes to unlock his door when the scent of someone makes him pause.

"You're home! I was---"

He grips the doorknob and tries to calm down before he moves to see who it is.

The instant to growl and attack the intruder is strong, but he turns to glare at them.

"Yes, I am, and I would *appreciate it if* you'd leave me alone."

The wolf, an obvious alpha, flashes his red eyes at Will.

"I was just…"

Will growls, nearly turning, and tosses one of his gifts at the alpha. "LEAVE ME ALONE!"

The werewolf growls back. "You think you're so good, huh? You fucking…"

A sudden flash makes them both pause as a man appears out of thin air in front of Will's house holding a covered bowl.

"Hello, am I interrupting something?"

The alpha's eyes suddenly widen and he runs off leaving Will alone.

Will blinks. "Um...hi?"

The man walks up Will's sidewalk and stops at the last step of the porch. Will sniffs the air to find the stranger's scent and it's oddly pretty, like dried flowers.

"I've just moved into the neighborhood and I thought I'd introduce myself to my neighbors."

Will frowns. "Why?"

He holds out the bowl and Will takes it. "It's only polite, is it not?"

His eyes flash for a moment and they're not red, like the alphas that have bothered Will for so long.

No.

They're almost violet.

Will inhales his dried flower scent again and steps closer. "Thank you."

"My name is Dr. Hannibal Lecter," the stranger says, "And if you need anything...I'm only a call away."

Will smiles. "A call? I don't even have your phone number."

Hannibal smiles. "You won't need it, Will. Just my name."

His smile fades. "How do you know my name?"

Hannibal takes his hand. "There is not a name I don't know, but yours...yours I feel I was born to speak."

Will feels an odd drip of slick slide out his backside at his words.

"You…you're...what are you?"

"Someone who wants to be there for you," he whispers, kissing Will's hand, "And provide anything to keep unwanted attention out of your way."

"You're not an alpha."

"I could be, if that's what you want."

Will laughs nervously. "I want you to tell me what you are."

Hannibal lets his hand go and steps back. "I'll tell you when you're ready. Have a good evening, Will. My...appearance...should help keep the unwanted advances of the other werewolves away."

"Wait, I---"

Hannibal suddenly disappears just as fast as he came, and Will opens the bowl to find fresh uncooked meat inside. Will's fangs suddenly ache and he growls.

He can smell the meat clearly.

It's human.

Will nearly runs into the house and pulls the meat out in chunks eating it so fast he nearly chokes.

Human meat is illegal to consume, but he feels as if Hannibal is above the laws of the alliance between monsters and men.

When he’s done he looks down at the bowl, panting, and the dogs whine around him as he stares down at his bloody hands.

Who is Hannibal?

What is Hannibal?

And why did Will feel the need to say his name and see if he would come when he was called?

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